

ARTICLE APPEARED
ON PAGE A 6

NEW YORK TIMES
27 March, 1985

ARMY GAMES, DUE WITH HONDURANS

By JAMES LeMOYNE

Special to The New York Times

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras, March 22 — About 7,000 G.I.'s will begin two large-scale military exercises in Honduras over the next two months, a United States military spokesman here says.

The maneuvers are to include the use of pilotless aircraft for reconnaissance missions over suspected guerrilla positions in northern El Salvador, said a Western diplomatic official here.

The new exercises are part of a two-year buildup of the American military presence in Honduras. The presence is part of the Reagan Administration's policy of maintaining pressure on Nicaragua's Sandinista Government across the border.

When the maneuvers are completed, the United States will have held five such major operations in Honduras since 1982 and several smaller training exercises. As in the past, Honduran soldiers will take part in the latest exercises, but Honduran officials said they did not know how many of their troops would be involved.

Drones Carry TV Cameras

The drone reconnaissance aircraft carry sophisticated television cameras on radio-controlled flights from the San Lorenzo airbase, a Honduran base in southern Honduras, the diplomat said.

The drones are almost silent and, at just six feet long, are difficult to detect, the official added. The San Lorenzo base is very close to the Nicaraguan border and to the Gulf of Fonseca on the Pacific Ocean, where United States officials have asserted that arms are shipped to Salvadoran rebels from Nicaragua. An American Embassy official said the spy planes would not be used over Nicaragua.

About 4,000 G.I.'s have begun arriving in Honduras for the first exercise, called Ahuas Tara 3, Capt. Milford Guttridge of the United States Army said today. The United States soldiers will repel a simulated tank attack from Nicaragua and also practice counterinsurgency operations, Captain Guttridge said. Ahuas Tara 3, a name derived from Indian words for Big Pine, is scheduled to end in early May.

The second exercise will start in late April, when 3,000 G.I.'s will conduct a simulated air and sea assault on the Caribbean coast of Honduras near the town of Puerto Castillo, Captain Guttridge said. The exercise, called Universal Trek, will last three weeks, he added.